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Bonn's MI 5 – Haven for Gestapo Men

About one third of the top officials of the West German secret police force are former Gestapo and SS officers, the weekly newspaper of the West German metal workers' trade union stated on August 29th.

The West German secret police force, mainly concerned with harrying Communists and other progressives, is entitled the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution"; it is roughly equivalent to Britain's MI 5 or the American FBI.

The trade union newspaper "Metall" said that 16 of the 46 most important officials of this top secret force had formerly served in the SS. Well-informed sources in Bonn stated that the actual number of SS and Gestapo men in the West German secret police probably exceeded one hundred, since the figures given by the trade union newspaper only concerned the Federal "Office for the Protection of the Constitution" working out of Bonn; in addition all ten provinces of West Germany maintain provincial forces which are known to be largely staffed with old nazi secret police.

On August 28th a West German Government spokesman had admitted that the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution" employed some SS officers, but claimed that it was impossible to dismiss them since they were civil servants who could only be sacked for dereliction of duty. In addition, he said, the dismissal of these men would be a security risk for the Federal Republic, since they knew too much about the internal affairs of the secret police. He claimed that all these old nazi policemen had made a clean breast of their past records when they had been recruited; they had been engaged because of their "training and past experience".

The West German newspaper "Stuttgarter Zeitung" published the names of two of these incriminated top cops. They were SS Captain Erich Wenger, who served for four years as a Gestapo official in occupied Paris and SS Captain Johann Ströbing, formerly employed in Amt IV of Himmler's Reich Security Main Office. Amt IV was the Gestapo central office; Adolf Eichmann was attached to a sub-section of this department.

Other old SS officers in the Bonn "Office for the Protection of the Constitution" include Wilhelm Ludwig, former SS major; Richard Gerken, former SS captain in occupied Holland; and Paul Mischke, former Gestapo captain in Hannover.

Prominent old nazis in provincial branches of the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution" include SS Major Walter Odewald, who helped to suppress the resistance movement in occupied Paris and Prague, and now heads the secret police in the province of Lower Saxony; and SS Lieutenant Adolf Puchta, involved in war crimes in Norway, who holds a leading post in the secret police in Bavaria.

A number of other very senior officials of the Bonn secret police are known to have held high rank under the nazis, although they were not SS officers. One of them is the Vice-President of the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution", Albert Radke, former colonel in the "Abwehr", the espionage branch of the nazi Wehrmacht; he visited occupied Slovakia in September 1941 in connection with the introduction of anti-Semitic legislation there.

Commenting on the scandal, the West German Social Democratic Press Service stated on August 28th:

"The Federal Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, owes the public an explanation as to how it was possible for SS officers to be employed. It is conceivable that these persons did not commit any crimes during the Hitler period, but they occupied posts in a command centre which organised the destruction of hundreds of thousands of people."

The West German newspaper "Westfälische Rundschau" commented on August 29th: "These 'old comrades' not only stick very firmly to the saddle; in addition, as the ministry of the Interior announces, they are irrepblaceable. This is the most open admission that has yet been made that the Federal Republic finds it impossible to get along without the experienced help of Himmler's assistants."

Facts on the GDR

... In the past four years, industrial production in the German Democratic Republic has increased by more than one third.

... Today the GDR is amongst the ten leading industrial states of the world.

... In the past five years, average incomes in the GDR have increased by 20%.

... Today one household in three has a TV set; in 1958 the figure was one in twenty.

... Today one household in six has a washing machine; in 1958 the figure was one in 62.

... Today one household in seven has a refrigerator; in 1958 the figure was one in 48.

... Every hour of the day and night, ten new flats are ready for occupation in the GDR. In the past five years, 1,200,000 people have moved into new flats or houses.

GDR Rejects Chinese Statement

The Government of the German Democratic Republic, in a declaration published on August 29th, rejected a Chinese Government statement suggesting that the Moscow test ban treaty had injured the interests of the GDR.

The GDR declaration stated that the Moscow Treaty was the first step on the path to a secure peace, and that GDR signature of the treaty had considerably strengthened the international position of the GDR. The GDR statement continued:

"In view of this, it is hard to understand why the Government of the Chinese People's Republic, in its statement of August 15th, makes slanderous attacks on the Moscow Treaty and the peace policy of the Soviet Union, and crudely assumes the right to judge whether the Moscow Treaty serves the interests of the GDR or not.

"The Government of the GDR emphatically rejects the imputations and insinuations made in the Chinese declarations; for this reason the GDR Embassy (in Peking) returned the statement to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

"The GDR Government also rejects the claim of the Chinese leaders to speak in the name of other socialist countries, including the GDR, and to intervene in the policy of the GDR. By attempting to disturb the fraternal relations between the GDR and the Soviet Union, the Chinese Government brings grist to the mill of the militarist and imperialist forces in West Germany. Such attempts to sow mistrust only help the imperialist warmongers.

"It is significant that the slanderous Chinese declarations are warmly greeted and spread by the Bonn Government, which suppresses every true word about the GDR. This shows how the Chinese declarations give ideological covering fire in the cold war to the most aggressive imperialists.

"Fraternal relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR are based upon a firm political, economic and moral foundation, and have been proved in many years of cooperation.

"The whole world knows how the Soviet Union has stood for the peaceful solution of the German problem, and for the strengthening of the GDR in the economic and political fields.

"The GDR Government cannot, however, avoid stating that in the past years the Chinese Government has devoted decreasing attention to the fight for peace in Europe, and has underestimated the danger of West German imperialism.

"On the other hand, the Chinese Government, by opposing the test ban treaty and by calling for its own nuclear weapons, has in fact played into the hands of the West German militarists. The angry attacks on the Moscow Treaty put the Chinese Government in line with the Bonn-Paris axis.

"Now the Chinese leaders claim that the West German militarists have welcomed the Moscow Treaty, and that they have heaped praise upon the Soviet Government with regard to the treaty; this is completely contrary to the facts. The whole world, including the Chinese leaders, knows how angrily the most aggressive circles in West Germany fought against this treaty. The Bonn Government was forced to sign the Moscow Treaty under the pressure of the peoples, of great parts of West German public opinion, and particularly under the pressure of the peace policy of the German Democratic Republic ...

"The GDR Government regrets the fact that the Chinese Government has not given due consideration to the complicated situation of the GDR as the western outpost of the socialist community in Europe. The Chinese Government has given little support to the political struggle of the GDR, and in addition the Chinese Government has sharply limited the economic cooperation between our two states.

"Between 1958 and 1962 the Chinese Government steadily reduced trade between China and the GDR. The cancellation of large deliveries from China, and the cancellation of large industrial orders, have considerably hindered the economy of the GDR, and the results have not yet been completely overcome.

"In the past few years China has had considerable economic difficulties, but the people of the GDR fail to understand why the Chinese Government improves trade relations with capitalist countries, including imperialist West Germany, and at the same time reduces economic cooperation with the GDR to a level lower than ever before.

"The best contribution which the Chinese Government could make to fettering West German imperialism and militarism would be to support the GDR actively in its struggle for a peaceful solution of the vital questions facing the German nation.

"The fight for peace in central Europe is an important part of the fight for world peace, a fight of interest to all socialist states, including China. It is unfortunate that the Chinese Government appears to have forgotten this fact, and that it attempts to divert the popular fight for peace into false channels.

"The GDR Government expresses the hope that the Chinese Government will find its way back to the joint path of the socialist states. In the common fight for the maintenance of world peace, for the construction of socialism, and against West German militarism, the relations between the German Democratic Republic and the Chinese People's Republic will then grow and become stronger."

(The Chinese statement of August 15th, to which the GDR declaration refers, claimed that the Soviet Union, in order to reach agreement with the USA, was ready to "sacrifice the international position of the GDR".)

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NEW VISA BAN

The British Home Secretary refused permission for representatives of the "Berliner Ensemble", Bertolt Brecht's world-famous theatre in East Berlin, to visit Edinburgh for the International Drama Conference early in September.

Reporting the refusal, "The Times", London, stated on August 29th:

"Mr Kenneth Tynan, who will act as overall chairman for the conference, said here today that the Berliner Ensemble was generally accepted to be the best company of actors in Europe. 'I was amazed to hear that entrance had been refused point blank and categorically to any representative of this superb East German company', he said.

"Mr Tynan explained that Lord Harewood (cousin of Queen Elizabeth, and Director of the Edinburgh Festival ed.) had made representations to the Home Secretary to ask for special dispensation for the company. 'We were told that East German actors, in common with East German footballers and East German cyclists and other artists, would be refused entrance', he said. He wished to express his strongest possible disapproval of the treatment.

"A letter from the Home Office quoted by Mr Tynan said: 'The present international situation is such that it was thought politic to refuse visas to persons of a country with a Government which we do not recognize.' This letter was signed by a secretary."

In the past few months there have been repeated protests in Britain about the refusal of visas to GDR scientists, artists and others. Here are some extracts from a House of Lords debate on the subject on March 21st 1963:

Lord Kennet asked the government whether they would rescind their decision to refuse visas to scientists and artists from East Germany, while permitting them to merchants. In all the international scientific unions the question was boiling up – should their meetings be held in Britain, or in some other country where scientists would be admitted on the single criterion that they were qualified scientists, and not whether they came from East Germany.

Lord Boothby said that the Government had never thought through what their attitude to East Germany should be, and did not know where they were or precisely what to do. The Government should face the fact that the situation might continue for a long time. Britain was not going to put up any effective resistance to the Berlin Wall by refusing visas to a few people from East Germany.

Lord Kilbracken said that artists being perhaps the least political category in any country, it would be more appropriate to stick to the traditional means and employ economic rather than artistic sanctions.

Lord Shackelton said the Government had made a gesture which was futile. They should now take the initiative, discuss it with their allies, and suggest that this was doing no good.

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In a leading article entitled "Let Them In", "The Times" criticised on August 30th the ban on the Berliner Ensemble. This leading article stated:

"The Government have made a wrong decision in preventing members of the Berliner Ensemble from coming to take part in a conference at the Edinburgh Festival. All the official arguments are well enough known, but they are not enough to justify the ban ... To ban artists who are anxious to meet their opposite numbers here seems to betray a fear that in such exchanges it is the easterners, and the eastern regime, who would gain the advantage ... Such an attitude displays a lack of confidence in the western culture and way of life ... A little more self-confidence – and a little less bureaucracy – is what is needed."

"I Saw For Myself"

Reader's Letter to 'Guardian'

Sir, – Having recently spent three weeks in the German Democratic Republic studying school examinations as part of a world study, I find your correspondent's somewhat hysterical articles unconvincing. To me, as to most of the teachers I met, the great enemy of the true Germany is nazism.

I had, of course, no direct means of judging what kind of a man Herr Ulbricht is, but I was completely satisfied that the people ruled by his Government were living happy, useful lives – lives not all that different from the lives of similar people here. In my view, there is more hope of lasting understanding and friendship between our people and those living under socialism in East Germany than there is with those living under the capitalist system of West Germany – a system which still contains many of the elements that led to two terrible world wars.

I find it extremely difficult to understand why the British people should have to be so consistently misled about the GDR. I suppose it may be because it is in many ways the most advanced of the Communist countries, and because the way of life of the people living there is more like our own than that in any other of the Socialist countries. It is, after all the only Protestant country to "go Communist".

My wife speaks German easily, so that we were able to shop by ourselves in some of the privately owned shops as well as in those run by public enterprise. We talked to ordinary people in the street, in trams, cafes, and restaurants, and at the opera. We were awakened by the church bells in the centre of Leipzig on Whit Sunday. In the abitur oral examinations which I attended, I found as much attention being given to Goethe and Schiller as to Communist theory.

Your readers should know that at least one Englishman and his wife found life in the GDR normal, happy, and inspiring.

Yours faithfully,

J. L. Brereton.
32 Cunningham Hill Road
St Albans

(From "The Guardian", Manchester, August 23rd 1963)

"Interflug" – GDR Airline

In future the civil airline of the GDR will be known as "Interflug". Since its foundation in 1954, the GDR airline has borne the name "Deutsche Lufthansa", but use of this name in western countries has been disputed by the West German airline of the same name.

As a result, the GDR had to found a second airline entitled "Interflug" to make all flights touching down at airports outside the socialist countries. In future these two airlines will be merged in one, bearing the name "Interflug".

NEW CITY CENTRE FOR

"East Berlin is a city of ruins – nothing has been rebuilt since the war".

That is a typical sentence from almost any one of hundreds of "travellers' reports" from East Berlin printed with monotonous regularity in western newspapers.

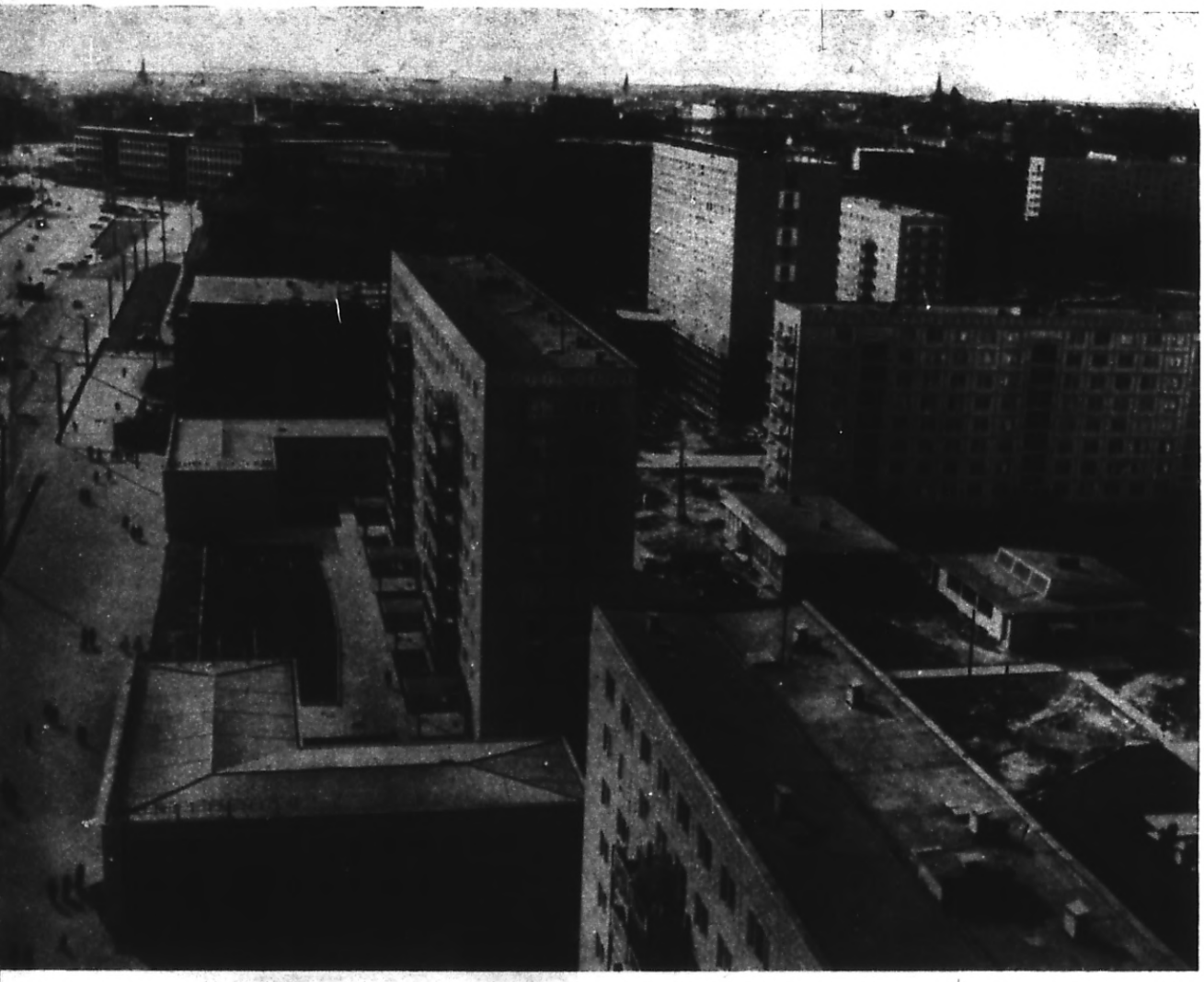
Until a year or two ago the people who wrote these hackneyed phrases had some slight excuse. Visitors who confined their expeditions to a small area in central Berlin did not, in fact, see much sign of rebuilding; they saw few of the 84,000 new apartments which have been built in East Berlin since 1949, when rebuilding started in earnest.

But now the great job of reconstructing the city has spread from the outlying districts into the very centre. Our double-page photograph, taken from the top of one of the tallest buildings on the new, post-war Karl-Marx-Allee, shows just a small section of the new city centre. Clearly visible in this picture are fourteen huge new apartment houses, all of which have gone up in the past two years, built by industrialised methods with huge prefabricated slabs.

Construction work on this section of the Karl-Marx-Allee, between Strausberger Platz and Alexander Platz is scheduled for completion by the end of this year, and most of the apartment houses are already occupied.

The lower buildings between the apartment houses are mainly shops. On the left side of the road, starting from the left, you can see a shoe store, opening any day now; the Restaurant "Moscow", in which the interior decorators are already busy, and a building which will house a clothing store and large flower shop. The scaffolding at the centre rear marks the "Teachers' House" on Alexander Platz, a 12 storey building with restaurant, club-rooms and a large congress hall, something which Berlin sorely lacks.

BERLIN, GDR CAPITAL



On the right-hand side of the picture you can see, nearest to the camera, a large arts and crafts shop, which has been doing good business for a year now. Behind it is a milk-bar and cafe, crowded throughout this sometimes hot Berlin summer. The larger, uncompleted building behind the milk-bar is the Cinema International, also in the hands of the interior decorators. Two inches to the right of the cinema building the large building with three prominent white-framed windows is not another apartment house, but the Hotel Berolina, which will soon come into service to help overcome the great lack of decent hotel accomodation in East Berlin.

Between the various new buildings which have sprung so quickly from the ground you can still see some of the old sub-standard housing which once covered the whole of this area, previously the worst concentration of slums in Berlin's East End. These buildings are marked for early demolition, and will be replaced by open spaces, parks and playgrounds.

"The Times" of London published statistics on August 5th on new housing built in all the countries of Europe in the year 1961-62. The GDR holds about the European average, with twice as many houses per thousand inhabitants as Ireland, about the same number as Belgium, Austria and Yugoslavia, and slightly less than Britain. Nobody in the GDR is satisfied yet with this rate of housing construction, and big efforts are being made to speed up new construction.

(Special footnote for cold war journalists: all the buildings shown in this picture are of course made of plywood, and will be taken down when the 1963 tourist season is over; the cars parked down the central strip of the road are inflated rubber dummies, like the fake planes used as decoys during World War Two.)

FOCUS ON ZEISS

by Allen Mann

The GDR town of Jena is famous for two main things; the battlefield where Napoleon defeated the "unbeatable" Prussian army in 1806, and the Carl Zeiss plant for optical and scientific instruments. It was the latter which brought me to this pleasant little university town in the picturesque valley of the Saale River in southwestern GDR.

The Carl Zeiss plant dominates the town completely. Its two big office buildings tower up alone right in the centre of town, overshadowing large parts of the plant, and over 17,000 people work for Zeiss. Since Jena (pronounced Yay-na) has a total population of less than 90,000, it is clear that nearly everybody — or at least his brother or sister — works in the plant.

The firm of Carl Zeiss makes everything from spectacle lenses to planetarium projectors; it is especially famous for camera equipment, microscopes, telescopes and very fine optical and other scientific instruments. The plant, the largest in the world in this field, produces about 64,000,000 individual parts and pieces of equipment every year.

The first department I saw was for producing photogrammetrical equipment — to take topographical photographs from airplanes and then convert the long strips of film into contour maps. The specialised equipment, which is made by only a very few companies in the world, is nearly all exported. 95% of it goes abroad, mostly to the socialist countries but also to Britain, the USA, Japan, India, France and some of the new states in Africa and Asia.

Zeiss is predominantly an export firm — 75% of all its products go abroad and they are a major source of dollars, pounds and other western currencies for the GDR as well as a very important factor in the economies of the socialist countries. Laboratories, hospitals and factories all over eastern Europe rely on the Zeiss works for optical and precision instruments.

I next visited the telescope department, which also produces largely for export. A parabolic mirror weighing 2½ tons and measuring 6½ feet in diameter was being inched into position when I arrived. It would be almost a whole year before the mirror would be ready for assembly in a telescope destined for Czechoslovakia, for it can be ground only for a short time each day, and then must "rest" for 24 hours.

A firm of this type obviously needs a very high proportion of highly skilled workers, engineers and scientists. This means that apprentice training programmes have always been extremely important, and now that the firm is nationally-owned training is going ahead at an even faster rate.

After walking through rooms with blue-smocked teen-agers busy at a wide variety of polishing, turning and milling jobs, I was shown into one of the apprentice school's bright classrooms where the school's director explained the teaching programme.

Before they leave school, pupils all over the GDR get a fairly thorough introduction to industrial techniques, first in their school classes and then, in the upper grades, by one day a week spent in a nearby factory, where they learn the rudiments of operating a lathe, of electrical systems in industry and of motors. In Jena, most of the pupils come to the Carl Zeiss plant, of course. Most pupils now get ten years of schooling (till 16 or 17) — soon this will be compulsory. They then have a three year apprenticeship, during which time they can also study for a secondary school diploma which permits them to get a much better job or to go on to engineering school.

There are now about 800 or 900 apprentices at the plant, which can train up to a thousand at a time. They get paid a monthly sum which increases every six months from the starting pay of 95 marks a month up to 135 marks at the end. This is by no means enough to live on (an adult lathe-worker told me he earns 600 marks, by way of comparison), but it is enough to cover most expenses and contribute to the family of those living at home. Most of the apprentices come from Jena or its outskirts, where there is a long tradition connected with the plant. But the school also has three hostels, one for girls and two for boys, which hold 125 apprentices coming from other parts of the country. They pay only 23 to 35 marks a month for food and lodging (depending on their income), although it takes about 250 marks to cover the costs of keeping them. The difference, plus all the other costs of training the apprentices, is paid out by the firm, which is reimbursed by the government to a great extent. This sum runs into several million marks every year.

The school director added that the apprentices also contribute to their own education, since they are also engaged in production. Last year, their work covered 36.4%. But there is a limit to these goals; if the apprentices cover more than 40% of the trainig costs with their work it is felt that they are spending too much time at production and not enough at schooling.

Most of the teachers have their own engineering degrees, plus a compulsory six month course in teaching methods. But there are also full-time teachers for foreign languages, biology and other sciences, mathematics, sports and all the other courses taken by the pupils. The director of the school, who told me all this, is himself a highly-trained educationalist who has been given national awards for his fine work.

The best pupils are aided in every way to continue on to technical college. The others start regular work at the factory, their jobs depending on their wishes and abilities. As in all factories in the GDR, they are constantly encouraged to continue training for better qualified jobs while they are working, and every opportunity for free study is offered them.

These apprentices, taking their place in the plant's countless workshops and laboratories, have guaranteed its steady continuity and improvement over the years. The firm, which was founded in 1848 by Carl Zeiss (1816 till 1888), grew from its prewar strength of 6000 to its present staff of over 17,000. In recent years, it has begun production in relatively new fields like automatic regulating and controlling systems, ultrasonic and vacuum engineering, electron-microscopy and various photo-electric effects. It is recognised as the most important firm in the optical-precision field in the world.

And yet, Carl Zeiss Jena has a problem, which has involved it in bitter court battles in a dozen countries. For a few weeks at the end of the war, Jena was occupied by the Americans, and when they withdraw, they took with them many of the

managers and top specialists of the Zeiss firm.

The original firm in East Germany was nationalised because of the large part it had played in the nazi war effort, but the directors in West Germany formed a new company, took over an existing optical plant, and called themselves Carl Zeiss. They then tried to prevent the real Carl Zeiss plant in Jena from using its own trade marks on its exports. Although their legal case was very thin, they have managed to get official recognition in West Germany and Austria, and at least temporarily in some other western countries. This has forced the original plant in Jena to fight court battles in Yugoslavia, Britain, Pakistan, Greece, and many other countries. In many cases the result has been that both companies have been authorised to use the Carl Zeiss name, with the GDR firm using the initials VEB in front of the name (signifying that it is a nationally-owned plant). Although the courts in most western countries are usually biased against the GDR firm at first, the Carl Zeiss people are confident that the much smaller West German rival, with less than a quarter of the staff and the range of goods, will never be able to assert itself for long as sole owner of the Carl Zeiss name, even in these countries. The facts thus far seem to be bearing them out, and the firm is continuing as key GDR exporter to all the world.

Impressions of the GDR

by Emil Appolus, former Editor of "South West News", South-West Africa

When I was in Nairobi recently, word got around that I had just returned from a study trip in the German Democratic Republic, and an editor friend of mine who works on one of the fledgling British-backed newspapers, asked me to write an article on my impressions. I readily grasped the opportunity and eagerly went to work. When a couple of weeks went by without a word, I phoned the paper to enquire what had happened to the article. "Oh yes, the stuff's good, just fine", was the reply. "It is only a hell of a pity that we are unable to get it in. Space considerations and all that, you know!"

Frankly, the article did not have a chance from the start, because I was determined not to add to the accumulating heap of misconceptions, bare-faced distortions and brutal lies about the GDR. The newspaper would have liked me not to mention the pulsating industrial growth of a country which less than a generation ago lay prostrate among charred ruins; not to report on the days I spent in the factories speaking to workers and work teams (forced labourers, according to so many western newspapers) and learning about their trade unions and their standard of living; not to speak of the Warnemuende Shipyards, Eisenhuettenstadt, the Black Pump coal mining, Agfa Wolfen Film Works and the Buna and Leuna Chemical Works. The paper would have liked me to write of misery, hunger, and oppression in East Germany.

For several weeks, with only a camera slung across my shoulders, and wearing old army boots, I trudged across the breathtaking Harz Mountain valleys, following the curling, swirling course of the Bode river.

I had countless interviews and conversations in the GDR. There were Erik Neutsch and his charming wife who had me over for dinner. Erik, a novelist and a chap with the healthiest of appetites that I have ever seen, says: "I write of workers, their problems, their loves, their victories and their defeats. Their human weaknesses and their pathos, and their power in socialism."

Any conversation here, invariably, turns to the question of peace. "My father fought in the First World War, I was in the Second", says Erich Stange. "And what did they tell us? That we were fighting for the Kaiser, or for the Fuehrer and the Fatherland. This was not true. We were in it to satisfy the sadism of despots and the greed of big capitalists." Herr Stange tells me that today he will fight with all his might to prevent it happening again.

Doris Beier, an eighteen year-old student, puts it this way: "My ambition in life is to be a good communist. It is a principle for which my father endured extreme suffering at the hands of the nazis and I am not going to desert it now."

No one pretends that there are no difficulties, no problems. Unpredictable weather sometimes plays havoc with essential crops. There is a waiting list for cars, brown coal is a difficult basis on which to build heavy industry, and seamless stockings were in short supply. Before the Berlin border was closed, the abnormal situation was causing a serious drain on planned economy and subsidised foodstuffs. But to suggest that famine reigns in the GDR is to sink lower than Sir Oswald Mosley.

In a Berlin restaurant I struck up a conversation with Helen, an English girl, who has been in West Berlin for some time but had never before "dared" to cross into East Berlin. We decided to do the town together and hurry over for tickets to the Berlin State Opera. Helen was genuinely flabbergasted at the glitter of the theatre crowd. A pleasant evening; only spoiled by Helen's criticism of "her" newspapers. She had no idea, she exclaims, that "it could be like this". It riled her every time she looked around the well dressed GDR women in the audience and compared them to her sloppy attire.

As the Lufthansa plane nosed its way southwards from Berlin over the farmlands, and over a white plume of smoke curling up lazily from the chimneys of the Black Pump combine, I felt angry; angry at myself for listening in silence in the past to the lies told about the GDR; angry at myself for being even a passive partner in the grotesque conspiracy to pretend the GDR does not exist.

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Some American general in West Berlin qualified for the title of "Most Tactful Man of the Year" a couple of weeks ago; he sent US soldiers out on a manoeuvre, and had one of the teams decorate their helmets with neat little swastikas. To complete their disguise, they slung tin Iron Crosses round their necks.

Most readers will find this story a little hard to stomach, and many will find it hard to believe; if they want confirmation they can find photos of the GIs in their grisly disguise on page 12 of the West German news magazine "Spiegel" dated August 28th.

Accurate?

You may remember the two-edged testimonial given by a disgruntled editor to a reporter he had sacked: "He is nothing if not accurate: he is not accurate." I was reminded of this anecdote by one paragraph in an otherwise perfectly fair Associated Press report from the GDR, printed in the "New York Herald Tribune" on August 13th. The paragraph ran as follows "Some items, like cigarettes, are noticeably more expensive than in the West. A package of 25 Balkan cigarettes costs six marks ($1.50). Local brands are a little less."

The accuracy of this paragraph depends upon how much "a little less" may mean. The cheapest GDR cigarettes, admittedly pretty ropey, cost two marks for 25, or only one third of the price quoted by Associated Press, and standard brands cost two-and-a-half marks, less than half the AP price.

This is of course less, but is it a little less? To help readers in Britain who may find difficulty in converting marks into dollars into shillings, I should add that the popular brands of cigarettes in the GDR cost just about the same as standard-size filter cigarettes do in Britain.

Cooperation

On August 24th, West Berlin neo-nazis plastered the Jewish Community Centre there with posters decorated with a big picture of Hitler and the slogan "Despite Jewish lies Hitler was right". The posters bore the London imprint of the "British National Socialist Movement".

This is not the first indication that fascist groups in English-speaking countries are cooperating with West Berlin nazis. On November 25th 1960, GERMAN REPORT exclusively reported that Lincoln Rockwell's "American Nazi Party", the US counterpart of the British National Socialists, was trying to recruit supporters in West Berlin. We were able at that time to reproduce the photostat of a recruiting letter. Now, apparently, Rockwell's British croneys are getting into the act.

"Peasants" Nixed

Readers' letters still flock in on the vexed subject: Should GERMAN REPORT call the GDR a "workers' and peasants' state" or a "workers' and farmers' state"? There is a definite trend against "peasants"; no correspondent has yet given the term his whole-hearted approval. Here are extracts from two of the latest contributions to the debate. Beatrice King, of London, writes:

"Isn't it time we gave up dividing workers into categories, except for the designation of a person's job? Surely agricultural workers in the general sense are workers. We talk about workers by hand or brain in a socialist country, and that must include agricultural workers ... For the British, the word 'peasant' has a connotation that certainly does not apply to the GDR... And further, with increased mechanisation of agriculture and the increased use of science, the agricultural worker will come close to the industrial worker. What will you do then?"

Mr J. Staniforth of Sheffield writes:

"Here are my brilliant suggestions. Firstly stop using the term peasant. In Britain the word is now no longer used in its original context... I should think that the best possible term would be that of 'agricultural workers' or perhaps 'farm labourers'."

Further contributions to the debate are awaited with interest.

Grim Travellers

All readers of GERMAN REPORT in the western world must be familiar with those horror stories written by reporters who have made a two hour trip to East Berlin. One of the standard phrases runs like this: "I took a trip on the underground; the passengers were silent and grim; nobody smiled."

I paid a short visit to London in mid-August, and took several trips on the underground. The passengers were silent, and often grim; nobody smiled.

Incidentally, many of the "I-ventured-behind-the-Berlin-Wall" reporters note, not unfairly, that some sections of East Berlin and its underground railway are a bit unkempt and underlighted and have not been painted for quite some time. If they are Londoners they should take a closer look at some of their own underground stations, particularly in the East End of London. Most particularly they should inspect the exit tunnel from King's Cross Underground to the main line station; there is nothing in East Berlin which can compete with that passage for tatty squalor.

Premature

Readers in Moscow and Welwyn Garden City have drawn my attention to the fact that in our issue of August 9th 1963 we referred in large print on the front page to something as having happened in October 12th 1963. The year should, of course, have been 1962. Our face is doubly red; firstly we often go out of our way to stamp on the toes of other journalists who make mistakes, and secondly we have another correction to make in the next paragraph.

Jaw-breaker

We have to announce with regret that GERMAN REPORT recently nodded (June 28th) when it stated that the full name of General Kielmansegg, the new commander of NATO Land Forces in Central Europe, was Johann-Adolf Count von Kielmansegg. Further research shows that his full name is of epic length: Johann Adolf Lothar Werner Friedrich-Wilhelm William Walter Dandolo Count von Kielmansegg. With all those names to chose from, one might have expected that his friends would pick out one of them, but for some obscure reason they call him "Kilian".

Since J. A. L. W. F. W. W. W. D. Kielmansegg is of vaguely Dutch aristocratic origin, the unexpected "William" presumably has something to do with the Royal House of the Netherlands, in which case I can only comment "Up the Rebels". And if this remark appears obscure to you, look up "Orange" in a good encyclopedia.

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